29th January 1929]

APPENDIX XI.

[Vide answer to question No. 1133 asked by Mr. D. Narayana Raju at the meeting of the Legislative Council held on the 29th January 1929, page 221 supra.]

G.O. No. 1969, L. & M., dated 3rd May 1928.

READ—the following paper :—

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue and Settlement), Mis. No. 2940, dated 10th October 1927.

Order—No. 1969, L. & M., dated 3rd May 1928.

The Government have for some time had under consideration the question of the decentralization of control over village panchayats. Under sub-section (1) of section 37 of the Madras Village Panchayat Act, 1920, the Local Government have power to appoint a Registrar of Panchayats for the whole or any portion of the area to which the Act extends. Under sub-section (3), the Registrar-General should attend to the constitution and superintend the administration of panchayats and when so authorized by the Government exercise all or any of the powers vested in them by the Act except the power to make rules under section 44. When the Act was passed it was anticipated that when under the Registrar-General's guidance a sufficient number of panchayats had proved successful and the movement had taken root, in any area, his control could be withdrawn from that area and the powers delegated to him could be transferred as experience might dictate, to one or other of the officers and persons mentioned in section 38, and that when panchayats had been established in every district and their usefulness demonstrated over the whole Presidency, the need for a Registrar might cease to exist.

2. The post of the Registrar-General of Panchayats was first created for one year from 15th December 1921 and has been continued since then on a temporary basis, being held by the Inspector of Municipal Councils. The number of panchayats formed has progressed as follows since the appointment of the Registrar-General :—

		Number of panchayats.			Number of panchayats.
1921–22	...	9	1925–26	...	933
1922–23	...	164	1926–27	...	1,924
1923–24	...	329	On the 11th December 1927	...	2,540
1924–25	...	579			

The following powers have been delegated to the Registrar-General of Panchayats :—

Section of the Village Panchayat Act, 1920.	Subject.
3 (7)	Declaring any area to be a village for the purposes of the Act.
4	Directing the constitution of a panchayat and modifying or cancelling a notification constituting a panchayat.

[29th January 1929

Section of the Village Panchayat Act, 1920.	Subject.
5	Determining the numerical strength of a panchayat and the relative strength to be allotted to each revenue village where a panchayat has jurisdiction over more than one revenue village.
11	Removing any panchayatdar or president from his office.
14	Determining the name of a panchayat.
26 (1) (*a*), (*b*), (*d*) & (*e*)	Approving the levy of taxes and fees mentioned in clauses (*a*), (*b*), (*d*) & (*e*).
26 (2)	Sanctioning levy of taxes and fees.
33	Suspending or cancelling any resolution of a panchayat or any order or notice issued by a panchayat or its president and prohibiting any act such as that mentioned in the section.

3. The office establishment of the Registrar-General has been added to from year to year to cope with the increase of work due to the growth in the number of panchayats. If the present system is continued by which the organization and control of panchayats is centralized under the Registrar-General of Panchayats and if the present rate of increase in the number of panchayats also continues the work will necessitate the formation of a centralized department—a step which the Government consider neither necessary nor desirable.

4. In the opinion of the Government the remedy for the present centralizing tendency is to confine for the present the activities of the Registrar-General to the formation and stabilization of panchayats and to hand over panchayats in each district which are fairly started and functioning to the care of a district authority which, later, it is expected, will be able to replace the Registrar-General in the matter of formation of panchayats also. It is under contemplation to amend the Madras Local Boards Act, 1920, so as to provide for the appointment of revenue or executive officers for district boards. To these officers, when appointed, the Government propose to delegate under section 38 of the Madras Village Panchayat Act, 1920, such powers of Registrar-General as may be necessary to guide and control panchayats in the district. In the meantime some other method of decentralization has to be temporarily employed. The Government have accordingly decided in consultation with the Board of Revenue to delegate to Collectors the control over panchayats which have become established. To this end the powers now exercised by the Registrar-General under sections 11, 26 (1) (*a*), (*b*), (*d*) and (*e*), 26 (2) and 33 of the Madras Village Panchayat Act, 1920, will be delegated to Collectors. These powers will be withdrawn from the Registrar-General in respect of panchayats the control of which is delegated to Collectors.

5. In G.O. No. 3597, L & M., dated 3rd October 1925, the Government outlined the part they expected district officers to take in helping the development of panchayats. They have reason to believe that with reference to that order Collectors are, as it is, interesting themselves in the growth and

working of panchayats. They do not anticipate that the powers now delegated to Collectors will result in such an addition to their work and responsibilities as to necessitate an increase of their staff, while there are good grounds to expect that panchayats will benefit by the closer and more defined interest which district officials will owe to them.

6. The Registrar-General of Panchayats is requested to submit at an early date detailed proposals in regard to the panchayats in each district the control over which may now be transferred to District Collectors, with reference to the orders in paragraph 4 above.

7. The appended notification will be published in the *Fort St. George Gazette.*

(By order of the Government, Ministry of Education and Local Self-Government)

C. W. E. Cotton,
Secretary to Government.

To the Registrar-General of Panchayats.
,, the Board of Revenue.
,, the Revenue Department.
,, all Collectors.
,, the Director of Public Instruction.
,, the Surgeon-General.
,, the Law (Drafting) Department.
,, the Law (Education) Department.
,, the Accountant-General.
,, the Superintendent, Government Press (for publication of the notification).

APPENDIX

Notification.

Under section 38 of the Madras Village Panchayat Act, 1920, and in partial modification of notifications Nos. 15, dated 3rd January 1922, 67, dated 24th January 1922 and 227, dated 21st March 1922, the Local Government authorize Collectors of districts to exercise the following powers in respect of panchayats the control of which has been transferred to them :—

Section of the Madras Village Panchayat Act, 1920.	Subject.
11	Power to remove any panchayatdar or president from his office.
26 (1)	Power to approve the levy of the taxes and fees mentioned in clauses (*a*), (*b*), (*d*) and (*e*).
26 (2)	Approving the levy by a panchayat of taxes and fees other than those mentioned in sub-section (1) of the same section.
33	Power to suspend or cancel any resolution of a panchayat or any order or notice issued by a panchayat or its president and to prohibit any act such as that mentioned in the section.